



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000

CMC
10 Mar 17

WHITE LETTER 1-17

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: All Commanding Generals
All Commanding Officers
All Officers-in-Charge
All Senior Enlisted Leaders

Subj: RECENT CONDUCT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Ref: (a) MARADMIN 365/10

1. In the past week, our core values have come under attack. While the majority of our Marines are focused on sustaining and improving combat readiness and building trust among the team, some have broken faith. We have received reports that within our ranks we have Marines who attacked other Marines on social media. The Marines who were targeted have primarily been female. This inappropriate, disrespectful, and in some cases criminal behavior has a corrosive and negative effect on our Marines and on the Marine Corps. My intent is to ensure all commanders and senior enlisted leaders have a common understanding of this situation, focus our efforts to support any victims of these attacks, raise awareness of resources to support victims, and ultimately eliminate the conditions that allow this cancer to grow.

2. Leaders at all levels must address online sexual harassment, threats of violence, and other misconduct as we would address any other form of misconduct or destructive behavior. Immediate action should be taken to support our Marines who may be victims of online attacks. I need all commanders and senior enlisted leaders to engage with your Marines and encourage them to come forward and report, whether they are a victim, or have knowledge of possible misconduct. There should be no bystanders; Marines should "Join the Conversation." When Marines do report, they must have the full support of their leadership, from NCOs up to the Commanding Officer and Commanding General. They must have a viable means to report and have immediate resources available to support them. Victims must be educated on the resources available to them, including:

- Chain of Command and Small Unit Leadership
- Chaplains
- Victim Legal Counsel
- Uniformed Victim Advocates
- Equal Opportunity Advisors
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Victim Advocates
- Sexual Assault Support Lines

Technical assistance is also available to help remedy or mitigate the harm they have suffered.

3. To get ahead of future incidents, we must continue to educate Marines on the dangers, vulnerabilities, and expectations of conduct when engaging in online activity. Marines must understand they carry the title "Marine" 24/7, even on social media. MARADMIN 365/10 provides current social media guidance; it will be updated soon. Leaders should remind our Marines they are not anonymous in the virtual world and remain accountable for their actions. Where we find criminal behavior, we will take appropriate action.

4. I have established a task force at Headquarters Marine Corps, led by ACMC, to determine the scale and scope of the problem we face. The task force will be informed by insights from our Marines and address those aspects of our training, leadership, policy, and legal processes where changes or corrective action are required. We will take a hard look at the conditions and attitudes that enabled this problem to develop. We have lost trust with some of our Marines and we have to rebuild it.

5. Every Marine is a valued member of our team. I don't care who they are or where they came from. I only care that they earned our title and deserve our respect. The recent attacks on social media can be overcome if we address the behaviors and attitudes that caused these unacceptable actions in the first place. We are better than this. I will leave you with a thought from another senior military leader who dealt with a similar issue in 2013: "the standard you walk by...is the standard you accept." I have faith in our commanders and senior enlisted leaders to guide our Marines through this issue and enforce our standards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Neller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent.

Robert B. Neller